



Youth Cooperation Fund

The Balkan Forum

2nd Call for Proposals for Small Size Grants

to

Support regional youth initiatives in the Western Balkans with the aim of accelerating the transition to the circular economy

Guidelines for Applications

Deadline for submission of applications:

18 October 2021

I. Introduction

The Youth Cooperation Fund is a grant scheme established by the Balkan Forum, with support of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, which **aims to foster regional cooperation and dialogue between young people in the Western Balkan countries**, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia.

Specific objectives of this call:

- 1) Strengthening regional youth initiatives on research and innovation that contribute in advancing circular economy in the Western Balkans.
- 2) Enhancing policy advocacy skills of young people on circular economy.
- 3) Increasing public awareness and grassroots activities on environment and natural resource protection, waste reduction and recycling.

What is circular economy? The circular economy model where value and resources are maintained in the economy for as long as possible and waste generation is minimised, reduces pressures on natural resources while boosting sustainable growth and jobs creation.¹

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2020-10/green_agenda_for_the_western_balkans_en.pdf

The past 150 years of industrialization have been characterized by a linear economic model relying on the principle of 'take-make-waste'. This model has fostered increased dependency on scarce resources, resulting in both environmental degradation and egregious amounts of waste. To counter these far-reaching consequences, the development of circular economy, based on the principle of reduced resource use, has become nothing short of a necessity.² By committing to this principle, circular economy is aimed at minimizing the use of resource inputs, carbon emissions, and the creation of waste. This results in the creation of closed-loop systems through consistently reusing, resharing, repairing, refurbishing, remanufacturing, and recycling.

A common objective includes keeping products, equipment, and infrastructure in use for as long as possible, which improves the overall productivity of these resources. All 'waste' should become 'input' for another process: either a by-product or recovered resource for another industrial process, or as regenerative resources for nature, e.g. compost.³

In recent years, intensifying European and international policies and regulations have been undertaken, such as the Sustainable Development Goals⁴, the Circular Economy Action Plan⁵, the European Green Deal⁶ (including Green Agenda for the Western Balkans⁷), and the European Plastics Strategy⁸, aimed at implementing the circular economy as a sustainable model worldwide. Such a transition is a major challenge that requires much stronger understanding, commitment and action from all actors in the Western Balkans.

Within this grant scheme, we invite Non-governmental Organisations (NGO's) from the countries of Western Balkan region to join efforts and generate innovative and unique ideas for collaborative action on circular economy. Project proposals should seek to contribute to at least one of the specific objectives of this Call and at least one of the following:

- reducing waste (including food waste);
- promoting reuse, repair and recycling;
- protecting the environment, including by raising public awareness on the alternatives to single-use plastic in general and to single-use plastic bags in particular;
- saving energy, water and natural resources.

II. Eligibility

Through small grants we aim to support 3-5 cross-border projects with funding of up to **3,500** Euros each.

The funding will cover 100% of the total budget for proposed projects.

Project duration should be between 3 to 6 months.

² <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/assets/downloads/publications/Ellen-MacArthur-Foundation-Towards-the-Circular-Economy-vol.1.pdf>

³ <https://www.wwf.org/?355371/circular-economy-2019>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/pdf/circular-economy/new_circular_economy_action_plan.pdf

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1596443911913&uri=CELEX:52019DC0640#document2>

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2020-10/green_agenda_for_the_western_balkans_en.pdf

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1516265440535&uri=COM:2018:28:FIN>

For the purpose of application in this Call for Proposals, lead applicants must form partnerships with at least one partner coming from a different Western Balkan country (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia).

Eligibility criteria are applicable to the lead applicant and its partners.

Applicants can submit only one application within this call.

Applications must be written in English language.

Applicants must be directly responsible for the implementation of the project, not act as an intermediary.

Eligibility of applicants:

Applicants must fulfil the following conditions:

- be non-profit-making NGO/CSO legally constituted in one of the six countries of the Western Balkans;
- be a legal entity registered with the authorities;
- be able to provide registration documents of the organization;
- be in full compliance with the law and with sound managerial and financial practices.

Not Eligible entities:

1. For profit organizations/private companies;
2. Public institutions;
3. Individuals.

Eligible Actions:

Actions may include: exchanges; joint-research, advocacy, awareness-raising; hands-on community initiatives; educational activities; monitoring local/national institutions.

All actions under this call for proposals will be required to be implemented in the countries where the lead applicant (and its partner(s)) are registered.

Small grants will not support existing or continuation of previous project(s).

Non-Eligible Actions:

1. Actions affiliated with or supportive of political parties;
2. Actions intended to promote the visibility of the applicants/partners;
3. Events of purely religious or political character;
4. Events that consist primarily in capital expenditure (infrastructure, land, equipment);
5. Actions concerned only or mainly with individual sponsorships for participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, congresses;
6. Actions undertaken before signature of the contract;
7. Actions aimed at profit making activities;
8. Financial support to third-parties (re-granting);
9. Debts and obligations.

III. Submission Requirements

Please read the Application Guidelines, and after making sure that you understand and fulfill the criteria, submit the Application Form and Budget Form to info@thebalkanforum.org

If the criteria are not met, the application will not be considered and will be immediately disqualified.

IV. Support to grant recipients

The Balkan Forum team will provide support to grant recipients to ensure the correct implementation of the project as well as their future development and sustainability.

V. Reporting

Grant recipients need to submit an operational and a financial report within 60 days after the end of the project activities. The operational report should evaluate activities, outputs and outcomes in light of what had been planned according to the application form. The financial report should list all the submitted original supporting documents (bills, receipts, contracts etc.) against the respective positions in the budget that was submitted as part of the application.

Submission Deadline

Applications must be submitted by 18 October 2021. We aim to notify successful applicants by the end of October 2021.

Implementation of projects is expected to start in November 2021.

Any questions related to application may be sent to the Balkan Forum at info@thebalkanforum.org no later than 10 October 2021.